Customer Case Study

State Agency Improves Service Effectiveness by Giving Employees Database Access from Their IP Phones

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME

- Arizona Department of Commerce
  - 100 employees
  - 12 departments

INDUSTRY

- State and local government

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Increase service effectiveness to existing and prospective businesses
- Increase productivity of mobile workers and teleworkers
- Reduce telephony costs

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Built a Cisco foundation infrastructure
- Deployed a Cisco IP Communications solution
- Developed applications to access databases from IP phones

BUSINESS VALUE

- Increased service effectiveness by providing access to customer records and employee itineraries from IP phones
- Improved responsiveness with unified messaging
- Saved $142,000 annually

The Arizona Department of Commerce adopts a Cisco IP Communications solution to increase responsiveness, improve collaboration, and reduce costs

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The Arizona Department of Commerce promotes economic vitality throughout the State through community, workforce, and business development. “Our job is creating jobs,” says Tim Lawless, assistant deputy director of the department. “We encourage new businesses to locate in Arizona and existing businesses to expand.”

In 2003, the State of Arizona asked the 100-person Department of Commerce to move from its existing location to the State Capitol Tower building in Phoenix. The department considered three options for its voice system at the new site: upgrading its aging PBX, subscribing to the PBX-based phone service the State offers, or adopting IP telephony technology. “We realized that deploying our own IP telephony system would be less costly than either of the other options, and also provide additional capabilities that would help us meet our business goals,” says Lawless.

One such goal was to facilitate collaboration among employees in different groups. The Department of Commerce actually comprises 14 smaller departments—Business Development, Community Planning, and others—each with its own database of business contacts and employee itineraries. Limited visibility into other departments’ activities sometimes led to inefficiencies and lost opportunities. For example, two people from different departments might give separate, similar presentations to the same organization rather than joining forces, simply because they were unaware of each others’ travel plans. Similarly, Business Development could not easily find out which communities provided certain infrastructure services that a prospective business required—again, because it lacked access to another department’s database. In addition, arranging inter-departmental meetings took a long time because the Department of Commerce lacked a standard way to look up employees’ travel schedules. “By replacing silos of information with a centralized database that employees could access over the network, we would unify the department,” says Lawless.

NETWORK SOLUTION

After evaluating IP telephony solutions from several leading vendors, the Arizona Department of Commerce selected a Cisco IP Communications solution. “Only Cisco offered a complete solution for voice, data, and network security,” says Eric Mayer, IT manager. “In addition, most of the State of Arizona IP infrastructure is based on Cisco equipment, and having an end-to-end Cisco solution would simplify management.”

Arizona agencies submit IT funding requests to the Arizona Government Information Technology Agency (GITA), which had previously reviewed requests from other agencies interested in IP telephony. GITA selected the Department of Commerce for an IP telephony pilot because the department would be moving into a new location, avoiding the need to operate two systems in parallel during the transition. “Eighty percent of our business case to GITA was reducing service costs, and 20 percent was improving our service effectiveness,” says Mayer.

To deploy the Cisco IP Communications solution, the Department of Commerce engaged Calence, Inc., a Cisco Gold Certified Partner located in Tempe, Arizona, which worked closely with Cisco to deploy the solution. “Cisco’s participation in our meetings with Calence helped the deployment proceed smoothly,” Mayer says. “If Calence wanted Cisco’s input on technology matters, a couple of Cisco engineers would be on site within hours.”

Calence and the Arizona Department of Commerce embarked on a three-phased project:

- **Phase One: Infrastructure**—First, Calence built a Cisco foundation infrastructure comprising Cisco switches and routers, in the new location in the State Capitol Tower. The network upgrade not only supports IP telephony, it also provides the performance and bandwidth to enable employees to access a centralized database with a Web browser. Therefore, the Department of Commerce IT group was able to consolidate its individual departmental databases into a single, centralized database.
- **Phase Two: Security**—Next, Calence deployed Cisco security solutions to protect the network from infections, attacks, and unauthorized access, and to enable teleworking. A Cisco VPN solution enables employees to securely access the centralized database while traveling and from home.
- **Phase Three: IP Communications**—Finally, Calence added Cisco CallManager servers and a Cisco Unity® Unified Messaging server, and provided every employee with a Cisco IP Phone 7940.

“Now we can access both voicemail and e-mail messages from the e-mail inbox and forward voicemail messages as e-mail attachments. Cisco Unity Unified Messaging helps us to be more responsive to businesses thinking about relocating to the State.”

—Tim Lawless, Assistant Deputy Directory, Arizona Department of Commerce

BUSINESS RESULTS

Improved Collaboration and Greater Responsiveness

Arizona Department of Commerce employees can now collaborate with their colleagues more effectively using Cisco IP Communications capabilities such as six-way conference calling and voicemail forwarding. Mobile employees can check voicemail even in areas with poor cell phone coverage, using Cisco Unity Unified Messaging from their PCs. In fact, Lawless regards unified messaging as the most valuable feature of the Cisco IP Communications solution. “Now we can access both voicemail and e-mail messages from the e-mail inbox and forward voicemail messages as e-mail attachments,” he says. “Cisco Unity Unified Messaging helps us to be more responsive to businesses thinking about relocating to the State.”

Increased Service Effectiveness

The Department of Commerce IT group wrote an XML application that enables employees to retrieve contact history from the centralized database using the built-in display and soft keys on their Cisco IP phones. To find a legislative contact name and phone number, employees previously had to either call or e-mail the legislative liaison—and wait for a response. “Now we can press a soft key on the Cisco IP phone, type the person’s name, and the contact information and customer history appears immediately on the Cisco IP phone’s built-in display,” says Lawless. “Then we can dial that person with the press of a button.”

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—Eric Mayer, IT Manager, Arizona Department of Commerce

Another XML application that the IT group developed, called TravelWeb, enables employees to look up each other’s travel itineraries, which facilitates meeting coordination and also improves service to callers who want to know when an agency representative will be in their area. Employees enter their travel schedules into a Web-based application, and any other employee can use TravelWeb to view itineraries by date or by employee.

Mayer notes that with services like these, the Department of Commerce exceeds the service capabilities of many of the businesses it serves. “Often the public sector lags behind the private sector in adopting technology that improves service levels,” he says. “In this case, we were able to justify a new technology because of the clear ROI business case.”

Economic Development

Cisco IP Communications directly supports the Department of Commerce’s mission of economic development in the State of Arizona. Existing and prospective businesses consider area services, such as broadband access, a trained workforce, infrastructure services, airports, and major roadway access, when they decide whether to expand or move to the State. In the past, discovering this information might take several phone calls, and the results might omit some communities that met the requirements. “Now, if someone in Business Development is working with a company that needs specific services, he or she can immediately find out which communities offer those services by pressing a few keys on the Cisco IP phone,” says Mayer.

Another way the Cisco IP Communications solution stimulates economic development in the State is by facilitating telework, which helps retain employees, enhances quality of life, reduces traffic in the community, and helps maintain air quality—all factors that attract people to live and work in Arizona. Cisco Unity Unified Messaging is especially useful for teleworkers. “When I work from home, rather than calling my voicemail inbox periodically to see if I have any messages, I know the instant a voicemail has arrived because it appears in my PC inbox,” says Mayer.

Cost Savings

The Department of Commerce developed a business case for IP Communications that included ROI. Annual cost savings exceed $142,000, which means the system will pay for itself in two years. Cost savings include:

- $80,000 from eliminating the need for a full-time telecommunications support person to maintain the PBX and manage moves, adds, and changes.
- $40,000 from not leasing telecommunications services from the State.
- $15,000 from standardizing the data network on Cisco equipment, which accelerates troubleshooting, reduces lab equipment requirements, and reduces the time needed to upgrade equipment and apply software patches.
- $7,440 annual savings from eliminating phone-company charges for moves, adds, and changes. Now, when employees move to a different office, they can simply disconnect their Cisco IP phones and reconnect it in a new location without assistance.

NEXT STEPS

The State of Arizona has engaged Accenture, a Cisco Strategic Alliance and Registered Partner, to introduce IP telephony to all State agencies. The upgrade will include a migration from a fiber distributed data interface (FDDI) network to an MPLS-based VPN. Accenture will out-task aspects of the project to Cisco partners Calence and NextiraOne, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner. “Accenture helped the State identify specific cost savings and productivity gains at each stage of the deployment to cost-justify the migration to IP Communications,” says Mayer. Further cost savings are expected because individual agencies will no longer have to lease their own T1 lines. “Any employee in the State will be able to reach any other employee through five-digit dialing,” says Mayer. In the long-term, the State of Arizona plans to capitalize on its IP network for videoconferencing and wireless VoIP.

The Department of Commerce recently took advantage of its Cisco network and Cisco IP Communications solution to prove its value to the Arizona State Legislature. Every 10 years the legislature conducts a “sunset review” to determine whether to continue funding a particular agency. “If our sunset review had been conducted in 2003, we would have been challenged to provide a comprehensive list of clients, because the information was scattered across multiple departmental databases,” says Mayer. “In 2004, with our Cisco network solution in place, we were able to produce the information easily.” In its presentation to the legislature, the Department of Commerce also emphasized the ways that the Cisco IP Communications solution improved internal as well as external communications to further increase its business value to the State. “We passed the review with excellent results, which helped us secure increased funding for programs that had been historically cut by the legislature,” says Mayer.

PRODUCT LIST

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- Cisco Catalyst 4506 and 3550 Switches

Network Management

- CiscoWorks

Security and VPN

- Cisco PIX Security Appliances
- Cisco Intrusion Detection System
- Cisco VPN 3000 Concentrator
- Cisco Security Agent

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco CallManager Software
- Cisco Unity Unified Messaging
- Cisco 7940 IP phones

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This customer story is based on information provided by the State of Arizona, Department of Commerce and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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